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Thank you for your time this afternoon to discuss the opportunities that the SBA's 8(a) program has to offer to qualified individuals, tribal, Alaska Native Corporation and Native Hawaiian Organizations. I am uniquely qualified to talk about the 8(a) program due to the fact that I am only one of two individuals in the U.S. That has owned my own individually owned 8(a) company and who now has the privilege of running an Alaska Native Corporation 8(a) company.

There are many advantages to federal contracting; the federal government cannot file bankruptcy, there are federal laws that require the government to pay on time, the federal government is the largest purchaser of all products and services in the U.S. Federal projects are worldwide, meaning the work can be anywhere and is not dependent on the local economy.

I have seen the benefits the 8(a) program brings to hundreds of individually owned companies and the amazing changes it has made for Tribal 8(a) companies. The successes that the tribal 8(a) companies have enjoyed could not have been done without partnering with other businesses both large and small. The unique advantage that tribal entities have allows them to capture sole source non protest able contracts with no size limits. This type of unique contracting ability makes tribal entities very attractive partners for businesses of all sizes.

The entry into the 8(a) program does not require large amounts of capital to get started and the ROI is captured very quickly once contracts get started. There are resources that are available for all levels of support needed by startup 8(a)'s. The SBA offers entry level classes; there are regional classes, SCORE counselors and PTAC centers located throughout the nation. Additional support from the SBA was just added in the form of a teaming grant. Eleven firms have been awarded up to \$500k per year for the next five years to help teams of small business go after large federal contracts. The National 8(a) Association is one of those eleven organizations. We are here to help the tribes of Michigan succeed in federal contracting. The National 8(a) Association of which I am the President has had several years of experience of creating events and an environment that has fostered teaming for small businesses getting to know better the requirements of the Federal Procurement System. We can work with private companies, nongovernment organizations and government agencies to assist the State of Michigan in achieving its goals to assist small business in this state.

The National 8(a) association has outstanding relationship with other organizations such as the U.S Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the National Black Chamber of Commerce and the U.S Women's Chamber of Commerce. There are hundreds of qualified partners just looking to partner with the qualified tribal 8(a) firms. I cannot stress enough the value that a tribal 8(a) brings to the relationship with both large and small companies. There is another program known as the Mentor Protégé program that allows large business to partner with small

businesses to go after large federal contracts as a small business. This program is beneficial to both the Mentor and the Protégé. The mentor has access to contracts it would otherwise not qualify to receive and the Protégé gets to learn from a large established business how to do business at a high level while getting real past performance with a qualified partner. It is programs like these that are available to the tribes of Michigan. These resources are available and have proven results that can generate real benefits to both the tribal members and the community as a whole.

The Alaska Native Corporations have had great success in the SBA's 8(a) program, these corporations are the second highest tax payers next to the oil companies in Alaska. The revenues generated by these successful companies go right back into the communities and the Alaska Native shareholders (similar to Tribe members). These benefits accrue not only to the ANC shareholders and Tribe members but to all of the community in which they reside. I know for a fact that the Alaska Native Corporations/tribal entities and Native Hawaiian organizations stand ready to help the tribes of Michigan enter and succeed in the federal contracting arena. You will not master the SBA's 8(a) program overnight, it is not the answer to all the economic woes of this nation but what the program has to offer is a known process in creating opportunities and wealth. Many 8(a) companies do need assistance, mentoring and help, especially in the early stages of the program. It is not a guarantee of an overnight success. But this program is truly a jobs program and a business development program.

The advantages that tribes receive from this program cannot be overlooked, entry cost is low and the potential for success is high. There are multiple resources and organizations that stand ready to help the tribes if Michigan. If there is anything further that I can help with please don't hesitate to ask. Thank you for your time.